



Cree Nation Leadership COVID-19 Briefing Public Statement September 22, 2020

Status of Pandemic

The Government of Quebec confirmed on September 21st, 2020 that the 2nd wave of COVID-19 is considered to have arrived in Quebec. The Government is obviously very concerned and stricter measures are being put in place to limit the impact of the second wave. This means that the province has already begun to implement new confinement measures.

The Cree Nation reacted quickly and the majority of community members answering the call and doing everything they could to protect our elders and vulnerable community members. The immediate implementation of preventative measures like physical distancing, mask wearing when appropriate and most importantly our local mandatory self-isolation have allowed us to be confident in opening schools and giving children as normal a life as possible during these trying times. It was not easy getting here and implementing these tools involved incredible sacrifice and dedication from workers returning home who required to isolate or the specialists and medical professionals who go through testing protocols and other screening measures to be able to provide essential services in our communities.

The Cree Nation is in a very different position from when the COVID-19 pandemic began, we have experience, we have new tools and we have the resilience that comes from being a strong and united Nation. There is reason to be confident that we will do even better through the arrival of the 2nd wave in Quebec than we did with the initial arrival of COVID-19.

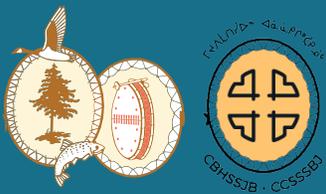
Testing in Eeyou Istchee

13 cases with 10 recovered, regular testing for COVID-19 in Eeyou Istchee is currently at:

- 1,074 regular tests have been administered
- 1,059 returned negative
- 2 waiting for results

The Cree Health Board continues to make efforts to increase screening capacity doing more screening tests focusing on Health Workers, patients returning home and other high-risk groups such as elder's home workers. The current Screening results are:

- 1,315 screening tests
- 1,302 returned negative
- 13 awaiting results



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Travelling

Neighboring regions are being watched very closely for any increases in cases, changes in the ability of regions to manage outbreaks and their contact tracing capacity. The Cree Nation leadership was very proactive in assessing regions so even as we watch the news and we see rising cases in the South there is currently no need to change the assessment of regions. Close monitoring of the Abitibi and Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean regions shows that those regions continue to do well in preventing COVID-19 from circulating in the communities. Northern Ontario is also closely being monitored and continues to do well having only sporadic cases at this time.

The Cree leadership is also happy to announce that workers coming from the Éléonore mine operated by Newmont as of October 5th, 2020 will be exempt from the local Mandatory Isolation Laws as the company will have set up a lab and implemented a testing protocol which will assist in determining the risk associated with site. The Cree leadership would like to thank Newmont for the investment in technology and development of procedures that ensure the safety of all of its workers on site.

After evaluation of the **Areas Representing a Risk**, those individuals who have in the last 14 days travelled:

- anywhere outside Quebec, except for the Ontario regions of Sudbury, Porcupine and Timiskaming, which includes the municipalities of Sudbury, Timmins, Moosonee and North Bay;
- within Quebec to:
 - **Region 1 – Lower St-Lawrence – since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM**
 - **Region 3 – Quebec Capital – since September 11th, 2020 at 12:00am**
 - **Region 4 – Mauricie and Centre du Québec - since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM**
 - **Region 5- Estrie – since September 11th, 2020 at 12:00am**
 - **Region 6 – Montreal**
 - **Region 7 – Outaouais (Gatineau) – since September 11th, 2020 at 12:00am**
 - **Region 9 – North Shore – since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM**
 - **Region 11 – Gaspé and Magdalen Islands – since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM**
 - **Region 12 – Chaudière-Appalaches – since September 17th, 2020 at 11:59PM**
 - **Region 13 – Laval**
 - **Region 14 – Lanaudière**
 - **Region 15 – Laurentians**
 - **Region 16 – Montérégie**
- any Hydro-Quebec site;
- to any mine site, please note:
 - Workers coming from the Windfall Mining Exploration Site of Osisko Mining Inc with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
 - Workers coming from the Renard Mine Site of Stornoway, with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;
 - Workers coming from the Éléonore Mine Site of Newmont, as of October 5th, 2020 with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate;



Travelling Continued

- any forestry camp, please note:
 - Workers coming from the Forestry Camp at km 105 on the James Bay Highway with the appropriate documentation will NOT be required to self-isolate effective immediately;

Therefore, people coming from Regions 2,8,10,17 and 18 in Quebec and the regions Sudbury, Porcupine, Timiskaming and North Bay in Ontario DO NOT need to self-isolate under the local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws.

It is extremely important for people to understand that until there is a vaccine, there will always be a risk associated with travelling.

Further, Cree travellers should exercise caution beyond what is permitted in other jurisdictions. For example, movie theatres, bars and sit-down restaurants are open in other jurisdictions and have been linked to a considerable increase in risk of outbreaks. Cree travellers are therefore recommended to avoid all sit-down restaurants, movie theatres or bars when visiting in other jurisdictions.

Managing Health Services

In the communities, services continue to be adapted to provide safe medical services and the Cree Health Board is making efforts to introduce more medical specialists into the communities. It will be much safer for Eeyou Istchee to have the critical health specialists come into the communities rather than high numbers of patients travelling to the South.

The Specialists are respecting strict screening protocols, supervision and precautionary measures that includes the administration of multiple tests. It is important to keep in mind that for the last seven months, the COVID-19 cases in Eeyou Istchee did not come from the medical professionals that come to our communities.

The Cree leadership would like to express its gratitude to the professionals and workers at Hotel Espresso and the patients that were residents during the recent trying times. There was a total of 3 cases that arose and after contact tracing it can be confirmed that COVID-19 was quickly contained and there was no transmission of COVID-19 in Espresso or beyond these 3 cases. The lockdown was very hard on patients and staff but the fact that the cases were limited to 3 and did not go beyond that shows that the sacrifice was worth it. Although in some cases one careless action can lead to the spread of COVID-19, it takes immense effort and sacrifice to make sure it is brought under control.

The Cree Health Board will be using the experience to learn and improve services even further at facilities such as Hotel Espresso.



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Eeyou Istchee Deconfinement Plan

The incredible sacrifice and discipline demonstrated by the Cree Nation over the summer in the development, implementation and compliance with precautionary measures including our local Mandatory Self-Isolation Laws allows us to remain in Phase 4 of the Deconfinement Plan while other jurisdictions have to move into re-confinement as the second wave of COVID-19 begins to take hold in the South.

The cooperation and the respect of physical distancing and precautionary measures has allowed the Cree Nation to protect our Health care capacity and protect community members from COVID-19.

- Activities like weddings, graduations, etc. subject to the gathering size restrictions
- Indoor gatherings (50 people max.)
- Outdoor gatherings (150 people max.)

It is our respect for physical distancing of 2 metres and respecting other precautionary measures that allowed us to reach Phase 4, and it will be our continued respect for these measures that will allow us to stay in Phase 4 for as long as possible for the benefit of all community members.

The Public Health team will continue to provide support to communities and organizations in deciding which services or activities to resume and how to do it safely. Organizations may send their request to:

18tcr.phcovidteam@ssss.gouv.qc.ca or covidrisk@cngov.ca

If you feel like you may need someone to talk to during these challenging times, please contact the Cree Health Board's Psychosocial Health Line: [1-833-632-4357](tel:1-833-632-4357). The Cree Health Board would also like to inform people that specialists with a traditional approach to healing are also accessible through the same number.

Education

The Cree School Board is making sure they are prepared for online learning and procedures should they be needed to address the potential cases in our schools. Continued support for post-secondary students, including those wishing to return home, is important considering how stressful it may be as cases rise in the south.

Adaptations are being made for regional gatherings such as the Regional Science Fair and Art Contests, they will be shared to the public soon. A parent survey will be distributed at the end of this week, the survey will help gather feedback and determine how the new measures are performing. The survey is supplementary to the daily health questionnaires that need to be completed. Every school has a dedicated Public Health representative should they need assistance or have questions.

Communities must continue to remain vigilant and maintain measures so that our schools can continue to stay open. The Cree School Board would like to express their sincere gratitude to people who respect the self-isolation requirements as it is an incredible sacrifice that allows our students to continue to receive in-person instruction.